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ABSTRACT

During the fall of 2001, the Office of Institutional Research at Piedmont Virginia Community College (PVCC) surveyed employers of 1999-2000 graduates. The purpose of this survey was to evaluate employer satisfaction with the job performance and general skills of PVCC graduates, as well as assess the effectiveness of the college's academic programs. Surveys were sent only to employers of graduates who answered "yes" to the question "May we contact your employer to conduct an employer survey?" Of the 133 graduates who returned the survey, only 38 (29%) had responded as such. Since the graduates who participated in the employer survey differed significantly from the total group who responded to the graduate survey, it is uncertain whether their employer ratings are comparable. Highlights of the survey include the following: (1) more than 80% of employers rated graduates as either "excellent" or "good" in every category; (2) 93% of employers rated graduates as either "excellent" or "good" in the quality of work category; (3) employers reported being generally happy with PVCC; and (4) 92% rated occupational training and education as either "excellent" or "good." When compared with the 5-year average, PVCC and its graduates have in general improved over previous years. (Contains five appendices, including the survey instrument.) (NB)

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Employer Survey Results for the PVCC Graduating Class of 1999-2000

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November 2001

Piedmont Virginia Community College
Charlottesville, Virginia

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Introduction

During the fall of 2001, the Office of Institutional Research surveyed employers of 1999-2000 Piedmont Community College (PVCC) graduates. The purpose of this survey was to evaluate employer satisfaction with the job performance and general skills of PVCC graduates, as well as the effectiveness of the college's academic programs. As one of the primary purposes of a college education for many students is to obtain a job, and attain success at that job, it is important for colleges to be able to evaluate the occupational success of its students. One of the most effective ways to do this is to obtain the employer's level of satisfaction with employees who graduated from the college.

This report is the 16th in a series of annual studies on PVCC graduates[1]. The results of the survey are included as Appendix A, job titles of graduates and participating employers are included as Appendix B, employer comments are included as Appendix C, and the survey instrument is included as Appendix D.

Methodology

To protect the privacy of PVCC graduates, surveys were only sent to employers of graduates who answered yes to the question "May we contact your employer to conduct an employer survey?" on the graduate survey. Of the 133 graduates who returned the graduate follow-up survey, only 38, or 28.5%, responded yes. This figure is lower than previous years (43% of the 1998-99 class, 42% of the 1997-98 class, and 34.8% of the 1996-97 class).

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[1] Employer surveys have been conducted on an annual basis since 1987 (see Ronald B. Head, *Employer Survey Results for the PVCC Graduating Class of 1984-85*, PVCC Research Report No. 5-87, June 1987). The most recent survey was published in 2001 (see Jennifer A. Shields, *Employer Survey Results for the PVCC Graduating Class of 1998-99*, PVCC Research Report No. 6-01, July 2001).

Using graduate permission to select the participating employers has the potential to bias the survey results. Although the possibility of self-selection bias is a valid concern, the privacy of the graduates dictates this method of subject selection. To investigate the level of bias due to this sampling method, the level of job satisfaction of all the 1999-2000 graduates was compared with the job satisfaction of those graduates who allowed their employers to be surveyed.

This study found a significant difference in job satisfaction levels between the group of graduates who allowed their employers to be contacted and the total group of graduate survey respondents. Overall, 59% of the responding 1999-2000 graduates indicated that they were either "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied" with their current jobs. Of the graduates who allowed their employers to be contacted, 97% were "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied" with their jobs.

A t-test was used to examine the difference in level of job satisfaction between groups. It was found that there was a significant difference between the groups ($t = -2.873$, $p < 0.01$). This difference indicates that caution should be used in generalizing the results of the employer survey. Since the graduates who agreed to participate in the employer survey differed significantly from the total group of 1999-2000 graduates who responded to the graduate survey, it is uncertain that their employer ratings are comparable.

Evaluation of Job Performance

Employers were asked to evaluate the graduates' job performance in six categories: technical job skills, quality of work, quantity of work, attitude toward work, cooperation with peers, and cooperation with supervisors. As can be seen in

Table 1, employers gave high ratings to the 1999-2000 graduates in these categories. Over 80% of employers rated graduates as either "Excellent" or "Good" in every category. This percentage was even higher in the quality of work category; 93% of employers rated graduates either "Excellent" or "Good."

Table 1: Evaluation of Job Performance

	Excellent		Good		Average		Poor	
Category	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Technical Job Skills	15	53.6%	9	32.1%	4	14.3%	0	0%
Quality of Work	15	53.6%	11	39.3%	2	7.1%	0	0%
Quantity of Work	9	32.1%	15	53.6%	4	14.3%	0	0%
Attitude Toward Work	15	53.6%	10	35.7%	3	10.7%	0	0%
Cooperation with Peers	17	60.7%	6	21.4%	5	17.9%	0	0%
Cooperation with Supervisors	20	71.4%	3	10.7%	5	17.9%	0	0%

To put these ratings in perspective, it is useful to compare the ratings for the 1999-2000 graduates to previous graduates. Table 2 compares the percent of "Excellent" and "Good" ratings for the 1999-2000 graduates to the average for the past five years.

Table 2: Job Performance Rating Comparison

Category	1999-2000 Ratings	5-Year Average	Difference
Technical Job Skills	85.7%	89.3%	-3.6%
Quality of Work	92.9%	89.3%	3.6%
Quantity of Work	85.7%	82.3%	3.4%
Attitude Toward Work	89.3%	86.1%	3.2%
Cooperation with Peers	82.1%	84.7%	-2.6%
Cooperation with Supervisors	82.1%	90.3%	-8.2%

As can be seen in Table 2, 1999-2000 graduates received higher than average ratings in half of the job performance categories (quality of work, +3.6%; quantity of work, +3.4%; and attitude towards work, +3.2%). The ratings in the

remaining categories fell only slightly below average (cooperation with supervisors, -8.2%; technical job skills, -3.6%; and cooperation with peers, -2.6%).

Evaluation of General Skills

Employers were also asked to evaluate the general skills of the PVCC graduates. Overall, the ratings in these categories (math skills, writing skills, speaking skills, research skills and logic skills) indicate employers of the 1999-2000 graduates are satisfied with the general skills of the PVCC graduates, as shown in Table 3. Three of four employers rated graduates as either "Excellent" or "Good" in four of the general skills categories (logic skills, 91.7%; writing skills, 87.0%; math skills, 86.4%; and speaking skills, 76.0%). In the research skills category, two-thirds (66.7%) of employers rated graduates as "Excellent" or "Good."

Table 3: Evaluation of General Skills

	Excellent		Good		Average		Poor	
Category	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Math Skills	6	27.3%	13	59.1%	3	13.6%	0	0%
Writing Skills	6	26.1%	14	60.9%	3	13.0%	0	0%
Speaking Skills	7	28.0%	12	48.0%	6	24.0%	0	0%
Research Skills	5	23.8%	9	42.9%	7	33.3%	0	0%
Logic Skills	7	29.2%	15	62.5%	2	8.3%	0	0%

Again, interpretations of these ratings are more meaningful when they are compared to ratings of past graduates. Table 4 shows the 1999-2000 graduate ratings compared with the 5-year average. The 1999-2000 graduates were rated above average in four of five general skills categories (logic skills, +11.0%; writing skills, +13.3%; math skills, +1.9%; and speaking skills, +0.5%). The rating in the remaining category fell only slightly below average (research skills, -3.7%).

Table 4: General Skills Rating Comparison

Category	1999-2000 Ratings	5-Year Average	Difference
Math Skills	86.4%	84.5%	1.9%
Writing Skills	87.0%	73.7%	13.3%
Speaking Skills	76.0%	75.5%	0.5%
Research Skills	66.7%	70.4%	-3.7%
Logic Skills	91.7%	80.7%	11.0%

Evaluation of PVCC Education and Training

In addition to rating the 1999-2000 graduates in the areas of job performance and general skills, employers were asked to rate PVCC in terms of the occupational training and education and general education it provided its graduates. The results of this evaluation are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: PVCC Evaluation

	Excellent		Good		Average		Poor	
Category	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Occupational Training & Education	6	23.1%	18	69.2%	2	7.7%	0	0%
General Education	6	23.1%	18	69.2%	2	7.7%	0	0%

As can be seen above, the employers surveyed reported being as satisfied with PVCC as they were with its graduates. In the category of occupational training and education, over 90% (92.3%) of employers rated PVCC as either "Excellent" or "Good." In terms of the general education PVCC provided to the 1999-2000 graduates, employers were equally as satisfied (general education, 92.3%).

In comparison with previous employer surveys, employers rated the general education provided by PVCC higher than average (+5.3%). The occupational

training and education PVCC provided to its 1999-2000 graduates was also rated "Excellent" or "Good" by more employers than in previous years (+3.1%).

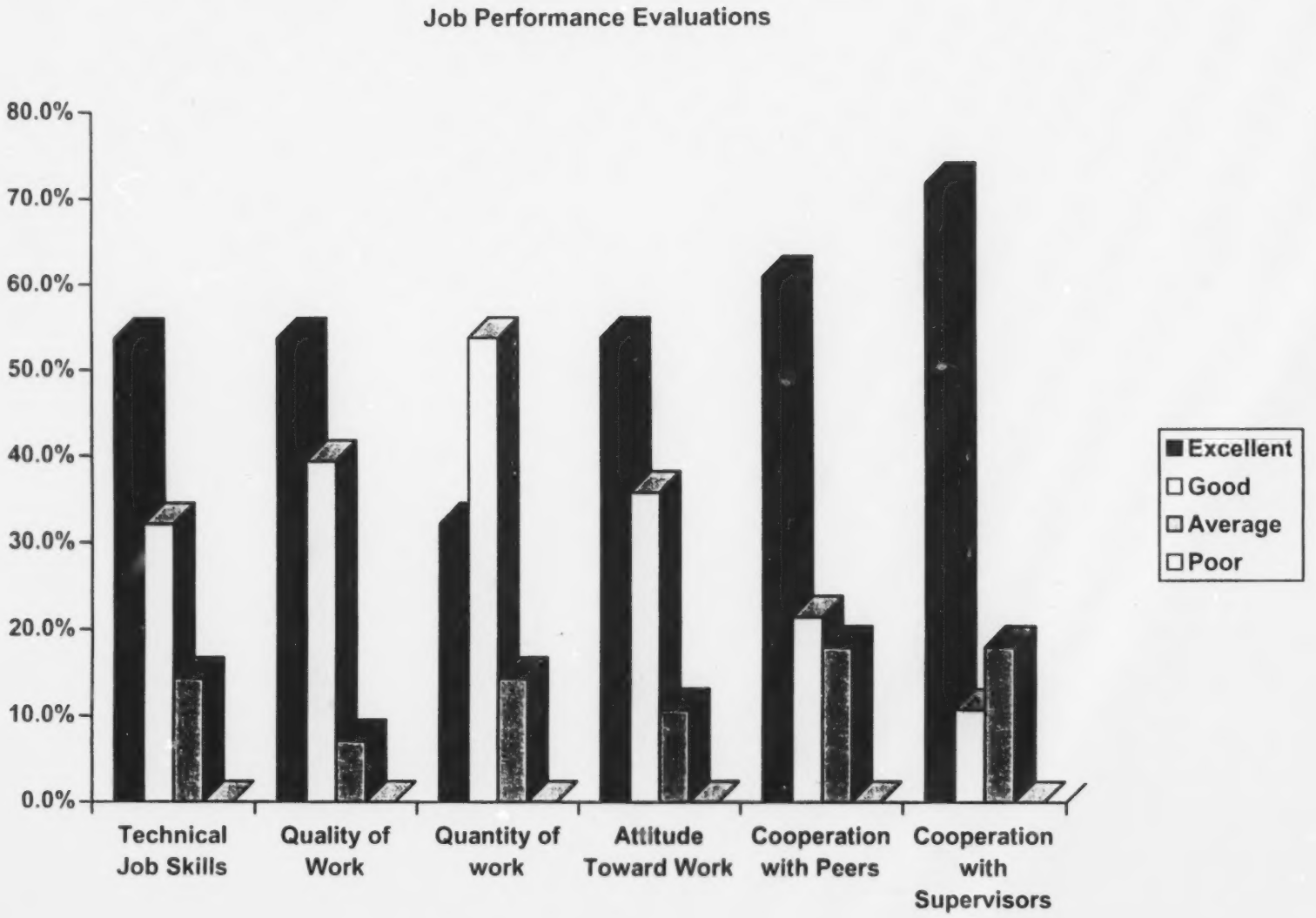
Table 6: PVCC Rating Comparisons

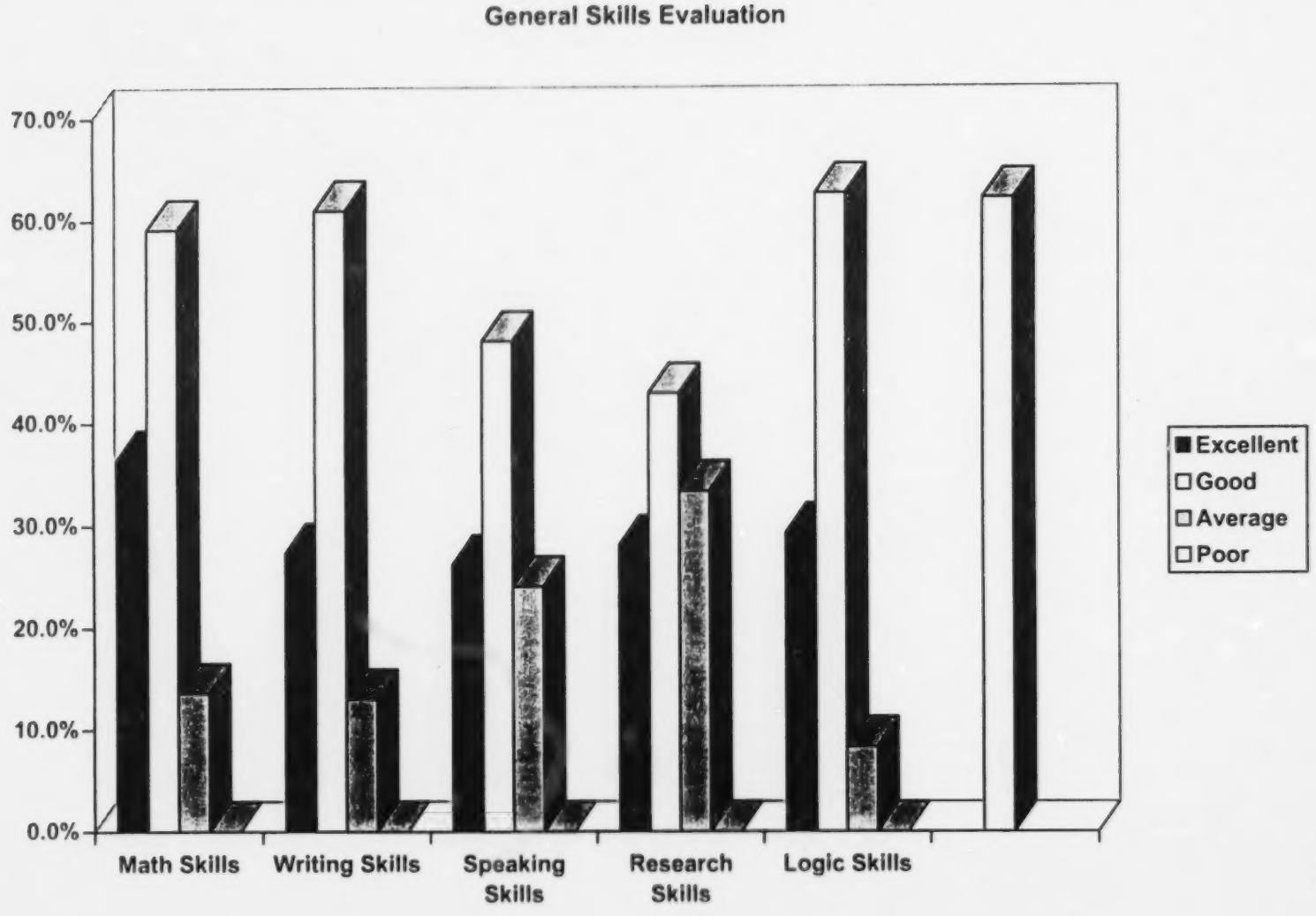
Category	1999-2000 Ratings	5-Year Average	Difference
Occupational Training & Education	92.3%	89.2%	3.1%
General Education	92.3%	87.0%	5.3%

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the satisfaction of employers of the 1999-2000 PVCC graduates. Based on the responses from the 28 participating employers, it was found that employers are generally satisfied with the job performance and general skills of the 1999-2000 graduates. In most job performance categories, the 1999-2000 graduates received higher than average ratings. Employers also rated 1999-2000 graduates higher than average in all but one of the general skills categories. Ratings of PVCC's training and education also showed high employer satisfaction with PVCC graduates. Looking at all the employer ratings, it can be concluded that employers of 1999-2000 PVCC graduates are satisfied with the job performance and general skills of the graduates, as well as with the effectiveness of the college's academic programs. Looking at all the employer ratings, it can be concluded that employers of 1999-2000 PVCC graduates are satisfied with the job performance and general skills of the graduates, as well as with the effectiveness of the college's academic programs.

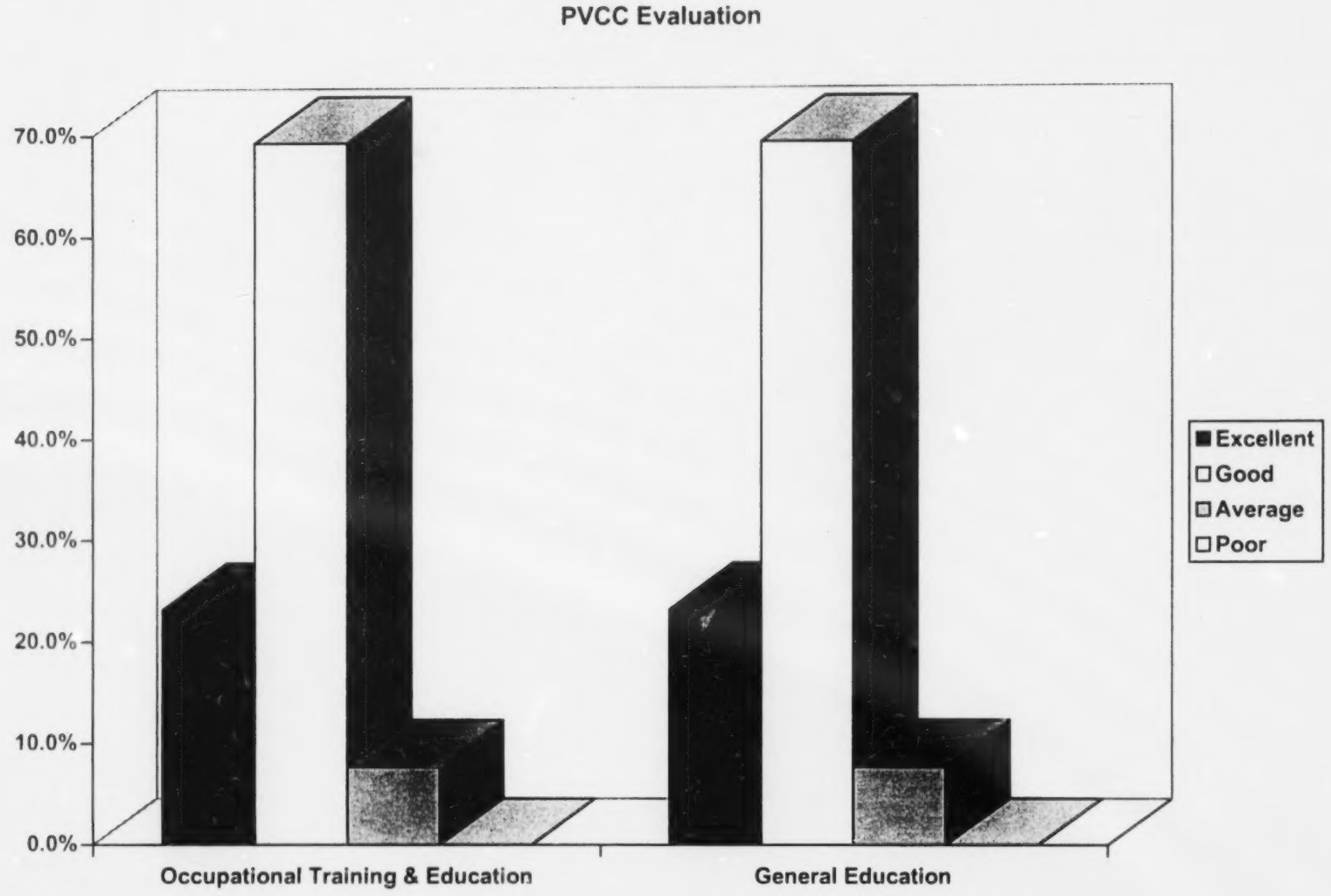
Appendix A: Results of Graduate Survey


Job Performance Evaluations
80.0%
70.0%
60.0%
50.0%
40.0%
30.0%
20.0%
10.0%
0.0%
Technical Job Skills
Quality of Work
Quantity of work
Attitude Toward Work
Cooperation with Peers
Cooperation with Supervisors
Excellent
Good
Average
Poor


General Skills Evaluation
70.0%
60.0%
50.0%
40.0%
30.0%
20.0%
10.0%
0.0%
Math Skills
Writing Skills
Speaking Skills
Research Skills
Logic Skills
Excellent
Good
Average
Poor

15

16


PVCC Evaluation
70.0%
60.0%
50.0%
40.0%
30.0%
20.0%
10.0%
0.0%
Occupational Training & Education
General Education
Excellent
Good
Average
Poor

Appendix B: Job Titles & Participating Employers

Job Titles of Participating Graduates

Administrative Assistant

Assistant Director of Nursing

Assistant Manager

Assistant Resource Librarian

CAD Admin or Technician

Clinician I / RN Staff Nurse

Digital Imaging Supervisor

Emergency Dept Nurse,

Human Rights Advocate

Interface Engineer

Manager Trainee

Media Service

Product Acceptance Test Technician

Registered Nurse

Service Associate

Service Technical Specialist

Teacher

Participating Employers

84 Lumber

Adams & Garth Staffing

Augusta Medical Center

Banta Book Group

Blockbuster Video

Body Ease PT Center

Christian Aid Mission

Design Electric, Inc.

Fluvanna Correctional Center

GE Famuc Automation NA, Inc.

Kindercare Learning Center

Luck Stone Corporation

Martha Jefferson Hospital

Medical Automation Systems

Piedmont Virginia Community College

Ross Industries

University of Virginia

UVA Health System

UVA Medical Center

Virginia Dept of Corrections

Appendix C: Employer Comments

Employer Comments

"[Name of PVCC graduate] is mature, conscientious, motivated, reliable – wonderful!"

"[Name of PVCC graduate] is a solid nurse. We enjoy having her on staff, she does a good job."

"[Name of PVCC graduate] is a wonderful addition to the staff at UVA. She is professional, friendly and intelligent."

Appendix D: Survey Instrument

Piedmont Virginia Community College
Employer Survey for the Graduating Class of 1999-2000

Instructions: Please check the appropriate box for each question. This information will be treated as strictly confidential with answers being combined for group analysis.

1. Compared to other employees you hire in a similar capacity, how does [PVCC Graduate] rate on each of the following job performance and general skill measures?

	"Excellent	"Good"	"Average"	"Poor"	N/A
Technical job skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Quality of work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Quantity of work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Attitude toward work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cooperation with fellow workers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cooperation with supervisors	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Math skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Writing skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Speaking skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Research skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Logic skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. Compared to similar colleges whose graduates you hire, how does PVCC rate in terms of the quality of education and training provided?

	"Excellent"	"Good"	"Average"	"Poor"	N/A
Occupational education & training	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
General education	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. Was a degree from PVCC required to obtain this job? Yes ☐ No ☐

4. Was a degree from PVCC required to obtain a job promotion? Yes ☐ No ☐

5. Did you participate in PVCC's cooperative education program? Yes ☐ No ☐
6. If not, are you interested in learning more about the program? Yes ☐ No ☐

7. Please use the reverse side of this survey to make any written comments you think will be helpful to PVCC in evaluating the success of its academic programs and graduates.